vices in different places of Maharashtra; and

(b) whether Government have decided upon any time limit to start Vayudoot services at remote places like Nanded and Akola of Maharashtra State?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI KHURSHEED ALAM KHAN): (a) Vayudoot is presently operating between Bombay and Kandla.

(b) No, Sir. Development of the essential infra-structure at Nanded is receiving active consideration.

Export/Import of Sugar

208. SHRI JAGADISH JANI: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether India has been exporting sugar to other countries on bilateral basis;

(b) if so, the total quantity of sugar exported during 1983-84 and proposed to be exported during 1984-85 to different countries;

(c) whether Government have also been importing sugar; and

(d) if so, the total quantity of sugar imported during 1983-84 and proposed to be imported during 1984-85?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI P. A. SANGMA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The total quantity of sugar exported by Indian during 1983-84; was 8.13 lakh MTS. Out of this, 1.55 lakh MTS was on bilateral basis. In 1984-85, STC has contracted for export of 1.61 lakh MTS of sugar. Beyond this sugar exports have been held in abeyance.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) No imports of sugar were undertaken in 1983-84. Due to the sensitive nature of the international sugar market it would not be in our commercial interests to disclose any information regarding 1984-85.

Trade deficit

209. SHRI JAGADISH JANI:

SHRI J. P. GOYAL:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been a record trade deficit of the country in the year 1983-84;

(b) if so, what are the figures of the trade deficit for the last three years;

(c) what are the reasons therefor;

(d) what measures have been taken by Government to augment the exports; and

(e) what measures are proposed to be taken to reduce the growing trade deficit during 1984-85?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND IN THE DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY (SHRI NIHAR RANJAN LASKAR): (a) to (e) The figures of the trade deficit for the last three years are as follows:

(Rupees)

Year	Trade Deficit
1981-82 (Revised)	5801·66
1982-83 (Revised)	5525·78
1983-84* (Provisional)	5951·16

*Provisional and subject to revision.

The higher trade deficit during 1983-84 is attributable mainly to two factors: (i) Port and dock workers strike which began on 16th March, 1984 (till 10th April, 1984) as a result of which no export consignments were handled at ports; and (ii) big increase in imports during the three-month period from December, 1983 to February, 1984.

Export Promotion is a continuous process. In the course of the last few years the Government have taken a series of measures to strengthen production base and boost exports which include removal of licensing constraints on export production, setting up of 100 per cent export-oriented units, establishment of EXIM Bank, easier access to imported inputs, upgradation of technology particulary for export production, extension of certain fiscal concessions on exports and setting up of four more Free Trade Zones at Cochin, Madras, NOIDA (Uttar Pradesh) and Falta (West Bengal) in addition to the existing two Free Trade Zones at Kandla and Santacruz. The Scheme of 100 per cent export oriented units which is in operation since 31st December, 1980 is showing good progress. To provide a vigorous thrust to export promotion activities relating to particular product groups, 3 new Export Promotion Councils have been set up, namely, Carpet Export Promotion Council, Indian Silk Export Promotion Council and Export Promotion Council for Construction and Civil Engineering Industry.

The Import and Export Policy of the country in recent years has increasingly been geared to be export oriented and production oriented. Several liberal measures have been incorporated within the frame-work of the policy with regard to import of raw-materials, components, capital goods and upgradation of technology with further simplication and streamlining of procedures. The Import and Export Policy for the current financial year (1984-85) has been formulated to improve our export performance keeping in view the global economic environment and the needs of the domestic economy.

Continuous efforts are also being made to step up our exports to foreign markets through various measures such as exchange of delegations; participation in trade fairs and exhibitions, organising buyer-seller meets; conducting market surveys and dissemination of information and negotiations at Government level to remove constraints in the way of our exports.

For constant monitoring and review of various export promotion policies, schemes and procedures, the Ministry of Commerce has drawn an Action Plan in respect of various commodities and territories. In this Action Plan action points are identified. The Action Plan is reviewed by the Commerce Minister every month and necessary directions are issued to all concerned for further action. Conferences of CRs (Commercial Representatives) at different regions are also organised from time to time under the Chairmanship of Commerce Minister to identity problems of the region and suitable strategy is evolved to boost our exports.

Simultaneous efforts are also being made to step up production in the areas where domestic production can economically substitute imports such as crude oil and petroleum product, iron and steel, fertilizers, oil seeds, etc., so as to reduce the trade gap.

A high level Committee under the Chairmanship of Commerce Secretary has also been set up to review, inter alia, the effectiveness of export promotion measures and import policies as well as to suggest rationalisation and improvements, wherever required, keeping in view the domestic economic situation as also the international context.

Strike by the employees of the Indian Airlines

210. SHRI BISWA GOSWAMI:

SHRI SUSHIL CHAND MOHUNTA:

DR. SHANTI G. PATEL:

DR. BAPU KALDATE:

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state: